

# Young Entrepreneur Profile

A Visit With Up-and-Coming Agricultural Entrepreneurs

## Emphasis on “green”

*Thriving greenhouse operators focus on low-cost heating option to reduce carbon footprint*



How do two young flower growers win the battle against the crushing cost of heating their greenhouses? The winning answer is that they create new possibilities before they become evident to others.

Matt Piscitelli and Clive V. Olson, of Olson's Greenhouses, Inc., are two business owners with the energy, drive and outside-the-box foresight to meet just about any business challenge. Matt is a natural born entrepreneur with a love of new business development. Clive is a third-generation horticulturist with the business tenure and intuitive skills required to run two flourishing greenhouse operations.

The partners met at Clive's retail greenhouse on Cape Cod where Matt and his wife bought lush bedding plants and shared conversations with Clive about business aspirations. Personalities and plans meshed. And in April 2006, Clive and Matt formed a partnership to buy Olson's Greenhouses from Clive's dad.

The thriving wholesale operation has been in Clive's family for more than 90 years. It spans 225,000 square feet of greenhouses and 60 acres of outdoor production acreage in Raynham, Mass., an upscale community just 40 miles south of Boston where property values are as sky high as the heating costs.

The partners burn up to a staggering 500,000 gallons of fuel to heat their greenhouses annually. According to Matt, “For the past 25 years, Olson's has recycled waste oil to cost-effectively heat its greenhouses. The

waste oil came from various sources, such as home oil-heating systems.”

Although the system was effective, the waste required a labor intensive cleaning process to trap its water and sludge. It was also considered hazardous and required disposal at a distant site in New York to meet EPA and DEP regulations.

Matt and Clive appreciated that in order to run a cost-effective, environmentally-friendly business, they needed an alternative source of affordable oil. Their first step was to look for a partner with experience, an outstanding compliance record and access to various sources of burnable fuel oil.

They found EnviroSafe, Inc., of Lowell, Mass., an environmental energy management company that could blend a variety of waste oils and also manufacture a low-cost fuel for Olson's. Matt said, “The fuel blends, which comply with our permit requirements, include waste oil, machine oil, crank case oil, precision cutting oil, greases and biofuels such as yellow grease [a food production byproduct].”

“Environmentally speaking, this partnership turns an otherwise ‘ungreen’ stream of waste into heat, which is a necessary component for our flower production. With this new partnership, Clive and I eliminated the disposal of otherwise hazardous waste while reducing our carbon footprint. EnviroSafe also transports oil to us and disposes of waste materials for us. We reduce the carbon footprint of both companies by operating



### About Olson's Greenhouses

**Owners:** Matt Piscitelli and Clive V. Olson

**Location:** Raynham, Mass.

**Operation:** Wholesale greenhouse representing three generations of horticultural excellence



*Matt standing by two 600 HP, low-pressure steam boilers at Olson's Greenhouses. The boilers are large enough to park several Hummers inside.*

and trucking locally rather than regionally.”

The operation's fuel consumption is still high, but with innovative thinking Matt and Clive have developed a long-term energy approach that is environmentally sound while supporting a healthy bottom line. ♦